

GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Board of Selectmen's Report

Executive Assistant's Report

Reports from Town Officers, Boards, Committees and Commissions

Board of Health

Lake Boon Commission

Fort Meadow Commission

SELECT BOARD - ANNUAL REPORT 2023

The Select Board are the Chief Elected Officials of the Town of Hudson. As the senior elected officials, the Select Board are the primary policy makers for the town. They serve as appointing authority for the Executive Assistant and most non-elected committee positions. They must also approve all employee appointments. The Select Board are also the statutory licensing authority for the town, as well as being charged with executing most contracts for the town.

MEMBERSHIP

The Annual May Town Election had Chairman Scott Duplisea easily winning her bid for re-election. Following the vote, the Board undertook its yearly reorganization by electing its officers; Scott Duplisea elected as Chairman, Michael D. Burks, Sr. as Vice-Chairman, and Judy Congdon as Clerk. On July 31, 2023 the Board accepted the resignation of Select Board member Shawn Sadowski. The Board continued to operate with a four-person Board for the remainder of the year.

APPOINTMENTS AND PERSONNEL

In 2023, the Board approved appointments of several members of the community to serve on Town Boards and Committees. We thank not only our past Board members all for their years of service to the Town of Hudson, but also those recently appointed for their anticipated contributions as we all work toward our common goal of improving our community.

In January new Finance Director, Neil Vaidya, was welcomed to Hudson after the retirement of Patricia Fay.

LICENSING

As the licensing authority for restaurants, alcohol establishments, automobile dealers, and other commercial activities, the Select Board are regularly busy with licensing matters. The Board issued approximately 180 licenses in 2023.

CONTRACTS AND AGREEMENTS

In 2023, the Board was pleased to sign numerous contracts throughout the year for the rehabilitation, repair and/or replacement of town streets, buildings and equipment. The Town's Chapter 90 apportionment for Fiscal Year 2024 is \$577,769.28. Chapter 90 funds are State monies allocated for roadway projects such as resurfacing and related work.

In March the Town signed contracts with Mass Broken Stone for the milling and overlay of miscellaneous roads in Town which totaled \$ 924,946.60.

TOWN MEETING ACTIONS

The May Annual Town Meeting had voters approving the FY 24 budget in the amount of Eighty-Three Million One Hundred Seventy-Two Thousand Seven Hundred and Three Dollars. Taxpayers also approved One Million Six Hundred Fifteen Thousand Two Hundred Fifty-Eight Dollars be taken from available funds for the replacement and purchase of vehicles and equipment for Fiscal 2024.


FISCAL ISSUES

At its annual tax classification hearing in December 2023, the Select Board voted to set the minimum residential factor available for FY24 at .8906 resulting in tax rates of \$14.00 per \$1,000 Residential and \$27.50 per \$1,000 for Commercial and Industrial properties. They also approved an excess levy capacity of \$800,209.00.


HUDSON BOARD OF SELECT BOARD




Scott R. Duplisa, Chairman



Michael D. Burns, Sr., Vice Chairman



Judy Congdon, Clerk



James D. Quinn

EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT

On the world stage, 2023 will be remembered as being marked by two big wars – an ongoing war of attrition in Ukraine as it continues to fight off Russian aggression and a new outbreak of violence in the Middle East between Israel and Hamas militants. The other big story of 2023 was immigration. Thousands of migrants arrived in Massachusetts last year as the federal government continues to struggle to implement effective solutions to an intractable national crisis. The arrival of migrants has strained the state's limited shelter system. Hudson, like many surrounding towns, stepped up and met the response locally with a coordinated effort across multiple Town and School departments.

At the Annual Town Meeting in May, the voters approved a FY2024 operating budget that was balanced using conservative revenue estimates. In recognition of the growing unfunded liability, the voters appropriated a significant amount, \$750,000, from certified and available Free Cash to transfer into the Other Post-Employment Benefits Trust.

Stormwater Utility Bylaw

After considerable outreach was performed in the community last spring, Town Meeting adopted a new Stormwater Utility Bylaw which put in place the framework for the Select Board to subsequently develop stormwater regulations and a fee schedule. This important work will position the Town to continue minimum effective compliance with the costly federally-mandated MS4 stormwater permit. Town Meeting also adopted a stormwater enterprise fund budget for FY2024 (along with enterprise fund budgets for water and sewer operations) which will give the Town the opportunity to implement needed investments in stormwater infrastructure. Significant culvert and drainage improvements were initiated at the intersection of Brigham and Park Streets.

Finances

Local receipts revenue as of June 30, 2023 documented good evidence for a local economy continuing to perform well. Excise tax revenue on meals and retail marijuana purchases significantly surpassed estimates, as did fee revenue for licenses and permits. Motor vehicle excise tax revenue, however, continued, for a fifth year, to remain flat. And, the new growth figure was considerably lower than growth realized in FY2021 and FY2022, further constraining the already existing limitations of Proposition 2½ and its ability to fund municipal budgets severely burdened with extraordinary post-pandemic increases in the costs of goods and services. The fiscal outlook for FY2025 and FY2026 is becoming increasingly concerning.

In 2023, a significant change in health insurance was implemented after successful negotiations with the Town's collective bargaining units. The health insurance reform law, G.L., Ch. 32B, Sections 21-22, allowed to the Town the ability to implement new plan design changes, adjust premium contribution splits, and transition the Town out of the self-funded arrangement that been in place in Hudson for decades. The new health insurance plans, along with more competitive premiums, will better position the Town to attract and retain employees. I would like to thank the Select Board for their leadership on this issue.

Significant capital investments were funded at both the Annual and Special Town Meetings. In May, a \$24M appropriation for a new Public Works Facility was approved and then funded via a debt-exclusion vote at the Annual Town Election. Town Meeting also continued the long-standing practice of supplementing Chapter 90 state roadway funding with \$300,000 in Free Cash. Three police cruisers, along with an electric vehicle for use by the School Resource Officer, were approved for funding. And in

November, a borrowing authorization was voted so that the Town could order a new Fire Pumper which would restore the Fire Department to a five-engine fleet.

Downtown

Hudson's downtown continued to remain a destination in the region supported by the numerous local restaurants and small businesses and with leadership from the Business Improvement District. In 2023, a downtown parking study contract with VHB was authorized to try to learn how efficiencies could be gained with potential adjustments to the parking regulations.

In 2022, the Commonwealth's Division of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance (DCAMM) conveyed the Hudson Armory to the Town to pave the way for the building to be re-purposed as a performing arts facility in accordance with Chapter 43 of the Acts of 2022. In May, Town Meeting authorized the Select Board to convey the Armory to the Hudson Cultural Alliance. The Alliance continued its fundraising and planning efforts throughout the remainder of 2023.

Personnel

In January, Neil Vaidya was hired as the Town's new Finance Director and Town Accountant. Neil brings with him to Hudson considerable municipal finance experience having served for many years as the Town Accountant in Northbridge. In December, Jamie Desautels was hired as the Town's new Fire Chief. Chief Desautels has extensive experience in the fire service in Massachusetts having served both in Northborough and, more recently, in Devens.

Proposed INTEL Redevelopment

In 2023, INTEL sold the land on 75 Reed Road to National Development, a Boston-based developer who is in the early stages of assembling a proposal for a significant new industrial development for this site. Early on, National Development began outreach to municipal staff and to the community to introduce their team and to begin discussions about their plans for the site.

In closing, I am grateful for the confidence that the Select Board continues to place in me to serve as their Executive Assistant. I am encouraged by the direction and support that I have received and I look forward to serving for many more years. A special thanks to Fernanda Santos and Teresa Vickery for their support of this office and their continued dedication to the Town.

Respectfully submitted,

Thomas Gregory
Executive Assistant

TOWN OFFICERS, BOARDS, COMMITTEES AND COMMISSIONS

<u>BOARD / COMMITTEE</u>	<u>ELECTED</u>	<u>TERM EXPIRES</u>
SELECT BOARD	Scott R. Duplisea, Ch.	05/2026
	Judy A. Congdon	05/2025
	James David Quinn	05/2025
	Michael D Burks, Sr.	05/2024
	Shawn S. Sadowski	05/2024
	(Resigned July 17, 2023)	
MODERATOR	Richard Harrity	05/2024
SCHOOL COMMITTEE	Steven Smith	05/2025
	Mark Jose Terra-Salomao	05/2024
	Christopher M. Monsini	05/2025
	Christopher P. Yates	05/2024
	Steven Sharek	05/2026
	Molly MacKenzie	05/2024
	Erica Ankstitus	05/2026
TRUSTEE BENEVOLENT FUNDS	Barbara Gustafason	05/2024
	Diane Buchanan, Ch.	05/2026
	AnneMarie Lourens	05/2025
HUDSON HOUSING AUTHORITY	Bryan Johannes, Ch.	05/2024
	Sarah Cressy	05/2028
	Stephen Domenicucci	5/2026
	Tenant Appointed Member Cynthia Janeiro-Ehlke	5/2026
	State Appointed Member Christine Dimare	5/2026
MUNICIPAL LIGHT BOARD	Jeffrey Supernor	05/2024
	Justin Provencher	05/2026
	Michael J. Andrade	05/2025
Manager	Brian Choquette	

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<u>BOARD / COMMITTEE</u>	<u>ELECTED</u>	<u>TERM EXPIRES</u>
PARK COMMISSION	Robert Bowen, Sr. ,Ch.	05/2025
	Michael Chaves	05/2026
	Jay Roan	05/2024
BOARD OF HEALTH	Michael A. Delfino	05/2024
	Cassia Monteiro	05/2025
	Allyson O'Malley	05/2026
LIBRARY TRUSTEES	Maryalice McCormack.	05/2025
	Thomas Desmond,Ch	05/2026
	Christopher Capobianco	05/2024
PLANNING BOARD	Robert D'Amelio,Ch.	05/2024
	Rodney Frias	05/2024
	Andrew L. Massa, Jr.	05/2025
	(Resigned May 8, 2023)	
	David Daigneault	05/2026
	Darryl Filippi	05/2025
Joseph Mitchell	05/2024	
(Appt'd to Massa's Vacancy)		
CEMETERY COMMISSON	Duane Searles	05/2025
	Nelson Luz Santos, Ch	05/2026
	Thomas Garrity	05/2024
CONSTABLES	Michael D. Schreiner	05/2024
	Steven Dana Bruce	05/2025
	Michael Peckham	05/2026
(Resigned 10/16/2023)		
BOARD OF ASSESSORS	Joanne McIntyre	05/2024
	Christine A Griffin,Ch.	05/2025
	Brian G Bowen	05/2026
VOCATIONAL REGIONAL DISTRICT SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBER	William J. Charbonneau, Jr	05/2027

Board of Health / Health Department

The Hudson Board of Health and the Health Department team strive to promote the health of our residents through prevention and control of disease and injury. The department is overseen by a three-member elected board that provides policy direction to the staff. The Board of Health is currently made up of Ms. Allyson O'Malley (Registered Nurse), Ms. Cassia Monteiro (Epidemiologist) and Mr. Michael Delfino (Health Inspector).

The Health Department is managed by our Director of Public and Community Health, Lauren Antonelli, who has been in the position since May of 2022. The Health Department Team includes: Donna Boulé (Health Department Administrator), Eduardo St. Louis (Sanitarian), Kali Coughlan (MetroWest Food Collaborative Coordinator), Michelle Andrade (Public Health Nurse), Alexandria O'Hare (Community Social Worker), Julie Zieff (Youth Substance Use Prevention Program Assistant), Deanna Wu (MetroWest Shared Public Health Services Coordinator), Thalita Campelo (Regional Health Communications Specialist), Edilane Silva (Regional Community Health Worker), Manizeh Afridi (Regional Epidemiologist), Pooja Shelke, (Regional Epidemiologist). During FY'23 we had 2 notable vacancies: Regional Public Health Nurse, Regional Health Inspector.

Throughout FY'23, the department continued to structure our programming into three main areas: Environmental Health, Community Health, and Emergency Preparedness Planning and Response.

Environmental Health Programs

We continued our work in various environmental health programs in 2023 including:

- Onsite Wastewater Disposal Systems (Septic Systems/Title 5)
- Food Protection Program (food inspections)
- Housing (landlord/tenant, bedbugs)
- Body Art (tattooing, body piercing and microblading)
- Tanning (indoor tanning beds)
- Swimming Pools (public & semi-public)
- Recreational Water Safety (lakes and ponds, beaches, blue-green algae)
- Keeping of Animals (backyard chicken coops, etc.)
- Body Works (massage parlors, etc.)
- Hazardous Wastes (household hazardous waste collection events)
- Medical Wastes (including medical sharps)
- Beaver Control
- Mosquito Control (EEE, West Nile Virus)
- Tick-borne Illnesses (Lyme disease)
- Recreational Camps for Children
- Asbestos Control
- Private Drinking Water Safety (private drinking wells)
- Nuisance Complaints (odor and air quality, vermin, noise, trash)

Our Sanitarian, Eduardo St. Louis, conducts public health inspections under the provisions of the MA State Sanitary Codes and other environmental codes, aiding residents in health-related fields. Inspections conducted include, but are not limited to, food establishments, public and semi-public swimming pools, recreational camps, housing and human habitation, septic systems, soil evaluations, dumpsters, body art establishments, and general complaints.

The Central Massachusetts Mosquito Control Project (CMMCP) continued to provide mosquito control for the Town of Hudson in 2023.

Community Health Programs

We continued to work on various community health programs in 2023 including:

- MetroWest Shared Public Health Services
- Substance Use Prevention (MassCALL3 grant)

- MetroWest Food Collaborative
- Public Health Nursing
- Community Social Worker Services
- Farmers Market
- Tobacco Control

MetroWest Shared Public Health Services

Local public health in Massachusetts has struggled to keep up with the changing demands of community health, and the pandemic exposed many of these staffing and resource challenges. As we adapt and rebuild from the pandemic, the Hudson Health Department is committed to providing excellent programming and services. One way to achieve this is by participating in cross-jurisdictional sharing of public health staff and services as a way to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of our local public health system.

Due to generous funding from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH), Hudson continues to serve as the lead community in a regional public health district of eight (9) communities in the MetroWest area, named the MetroWest Shared Public Health Services. We have continued to receive grants from the Massachusetts DPH totaling \$600,000 in annual funding. One award is the Public Health Excellence (PHE) grant, which offers \$300,000 annually. The second award is the Local Health Support for COVID-19 Case Investigation and Contact Tracing (CT&CI) grant, which also offers \$300,000 annually.

Through these funding streams, we are engaging in a shared public health services initiative with nine (9) other municipalities: Ashland, Framingham, Hopkinton, Maynard, Medway, Milford, Millis, and Natick. This shared service arrangement will implement programs to fill current gaps in statutorily mandated core public health services in environmental health and public health nursing, and, in coordination with our two (2) epidemiologists, will develop intervention strategies to improve overall health outcomes in the region and address health inequities. In addition, shared service collaborations strengthen existing core public health services by pooling resources, increasing staff capacity, attracting more funding, and providing improved public health programming and outcomes.

As the lead municipality, Hudson is tasked with managing all aspects of grant implementation including, but not limited to, hiring staff and managing grant finances and deliverables. Some notable accomplishments in 2023 include:

- The Epidemiologists have provided coverage for communicable disease investigations across the region.
- The team has supported a regional vaccine clinic for childhood school-required vaccines housed in Ashland. These vaccines are crucial in protecting the health of the student body and in allowing kids to go to school and stay in school.
- The Community Health Worker has connected countless residents to services including housing, health insurance, food access, and more.
- The Health Communications Specialist has worked with staff and colleagues in the collaborative to create various communications campaigns, infographics, and event promotion materials. Reaching residents with timely, relevant, and easy-to-understand information has been a priority for the HCS, especially during a time when misinformation and information apathy has become prevalent in our daily lives.

Substance Use Prevention

In April of 2021, the MA Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS) and the Department of Public Health (DPH) announced that the Town of Hudson was one of 31 youth substance use prevention programs in the Commonwealth that would receive a MassCALL3 grant. MassCALL3, which stands for the Massachusetts Collaborative for Action Leadership and Learning (3rd iteration), is an 8-year award under the Substance Misuse Prevention Grant Program. The grant is meant to support local substance use prevention efforts in communities across MA that fit under one of three overarching goals: Community engagement and capacity building; Comprehensive strategy implementation; Innovation and promising practices implementation. Hudson falls under what is called “Part B,” the comprehensive strategy implementation goal, as we have a well-established regional collaborative with a strong track record in substance use prevention. Hudson leads the regional group, called the Central MetroWest Substance Abuse Prevention Collaborative, which consists of Ashland, Hudson, Marlborough,

Natick, Northborough, Southborough and Westborough. The grant began in FY'22 (July 1, 2021) and will continue through FY'29. Hudson and the regional collaborative's focus are on substances of first use among youth, which includes alcohol, nicotine, and cannabis. This is an expansion from our previous substance use prevention grant that solely focused on underage drinking.

In 2023, Julie Zieff, Regional Youth Substance Use Prevention Program Assistant, oversaw the MassCALL3 grant program with support from Lauren Antonelli, Director of Public and Community Health. We continued to lead the regional group of prevention specialists and their community-based prevention coalitions through a 5-step strategic planning process that involved assessment, capacity building, planning, implementation, and evaluation. Sustainability and cultural competence are guiding principles of the process, and we have a strong focus on racial justice and health equity. The regional group spent much of 2023 working with consultant Amanda Decker from Bright Solutions to use qualitative and quantitative youth substance use data from our region to create a strategic plan for our prevention efforts of reducing youth substance use/misuse.

Locally in Hudson, the Health Department continues to coordinate the Hudson Youth Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition (YSAP), which routinely met throughout 2023 to work on coalition building and community outreach. The coalition consists of Hudson residents, parents, representatives from various Hudson businesses, recovery/treatment centers, and more. YSAP continues to work with the Hudson Public School system, Hudson Recreation, and various other youth-serving organizations to address substance use among Hudson youth. YSAP hosted their second annual 5K in September 2023 in partnership with the Marlborough Alliance for Prevention. It was a successful event that served as both a fundraiser and awareness-raiser.

In addition to our youth substance use prevention work, the Hudson Health Department continues to serve on the Post Overdose Support Team (POST) alongside Hudson Police, Fire, Patriot Ambulance and Advocates. POST offers recovery resources and Narcan following an overdose to the person experiencing substance use challenges, as well as, their family and friends. Unfortunately, we saw an increase in overdoses in Hudson in 2023, with 30 overdose events, four (4) of which were fatal. Motivated by this, the department relaunched a community Narcan training initiative, Hudson Overdose Prevention Effort (HOPE), where we train community members and establishments in Narcan administration and provide them with free Narcan.

MetroWest Food Collaborative

In FY'23, we unfortunately did not receive funding from the MDPH to continue on with Mass in Motion. The grant process for this program was extremely competitive this grant cycle, as the DPH decided to fund fewer municipalities at larger grant amounts. The program went from 27 to 12 grantees. However, we were able to secure funding through the MetroWest Health Foundation and Sudbury Foundation, along with a grant from the MA Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR), to continue our food access work. We continued to coordinate the MetroWest Food Collaborative (MWFC) with expanded membership to over 60 community members, non-profit organizations, educational institutions, farmers and funders throughout the MetroWest region. The MWFC Coordinator, Kali Coughlan, mobilized partnerships and resources to grow the MWFC and the workgroups had the below accomplishments over the past year:

Healthy Food Access Workgroup:

Inaugural Food Access Summit: In January of 2023, we hosted our first Food Access Summit to bring diverse voices to the table to look beyond emergency food, and to talk about the systemic changes that will make the food system stronger, more equitable and work better for everyone in the region. Congressman Jim McGovern was the keynote speaker and shared his commitment to advancing food equity and justice on a national level and thanked the collaborative for the work that is being done by all those in the room. Amongst the 60 other guests present was Senate President Karen Spilka, Speaker Pro Tempore Kate Hogan and Representative Jack Lewis, who shared regional data, perspectives on unique collaborations they've witnessed between Collaborative members, and recognition that policies are necessary to combat the issues of food insecurity within the region. Youth from Voices of the Community and Discovering Hidden Gems also shared first-hand experiences of the role of food access and justice and the impact on their lives.

Food Distribution Flyer by City/Town: With assistance from interns, we developed, translated and distributed food resource fliers in English, Spanish, and Portuguese digitally and in print. The flyers list available food and meal distribution sites, the Project Bread Food Source Hotline, and explain the Healthy Incentives Program (HIP) benefits at their local Farmers Market. These flyers serve as a place to capture what resources are available at each site and what residents need to provide in order to receive those services.

SNAP & WIC Gap Project: The Workgroup conducted surveys with local food pantries and Councils on Aging to gain insights into if they are assisting clients with SNAP and WIC applications. With this valuable feedback, Kali started to partner with the Greater Boston Food Bank and Project Bread to provide resources to residents at pantries to help make strides towards closing the "SNAP & WIC gap" in our community.

Food Equity and Justice Workgroup:

Community Listening: Kali and working group members conducted community listening sessions with over 40 residents in the MetroWest region from varying backgrounds. We had relaxed conversations to hear their thoughts about food access in their community. We asked questions about their experiences with food access, what food support programs they were aware of, where they go to find information about resources, and how we could work together to create action. Thanks to the MDAR grant, we were able to offer grocery gift cards, childcare and dinner to help minimize barriers to participation and to show our appreciation. Three themes emerged from the community listening:

- 1) Dignity matters, and participants want to be able to choose their food in a dignified way.
- 2) Participants identified access to fresh food, like vegetables and dried beans, being preferred over canned.
- 3) It is important to provide information on food resources in a variety of formats and channels (translated, print, online, going where people are, etc.) in order to effectively reach people.

Advocacy Training: We hosted our first-ever in-person Steering Committee meeting and received advocacy training from the MA Food System Collaborative to help build understanding of how advocacy impacts our work.

The MWFC participates in advocacy at the state and local level with coalitions working to strengthen the local food system. A few recent policy wins include: Universal School Meals became permanent in the FY'24 budget; Regional Transit Authority funding increased to \$150 million in operating dollars to support RTA communities; Local Food Policy Grant Program received \$250,000 of continued funding; Food Literacy in School received \$1 million in new funding to begin providing access to food system education in schools (K-12) so students can learn about agriculture, nutrition, food justice, and culinary skills.

Public Health Nursing

In 2023, Michelle Andrade continued in the ARPA-funded position of Public Health Nurse, providing a linkage between epidemiological data and clinical understanding of health and illness as it is experienced in peoples' lives. While most nurses care for one patient at a time, public health nurses care for entire populations. By working with whole communities, public health nurses are able to educate people about health issues, improve community health and safety, and increase access to care.

In FY'23, our public health nurse provided many services to the community including, but not limited to:

- Providing health teaching to individuals and families
- Receiving and making referrals
- Hosting and coordinating immunization clinics, including COVID-19 and Flu vaccines
- Working on health promotion/prevention programs in the community
- Conducting home visits
- Performing case management
- Facilitating and assisting vulnerable individuals with access to services and basic life needs
- Investigating disease and other health threats
- Advocating for improved and increased health care availability and access
- Participating in community organizing activities
- Blood Pressure Clinics for the Hudson Senior Center and Peter's Grove Housing

In 2023, we investigated these communicable diseases:

Disease	Number of Cases
Babesiosis	1
Calicivirus/Norovirus	1
Campylobacteriosis	2
Cryptosporidiosis	2
Cyclosporiasis	0
Enterovirus	2
Giardiasis	2
Group A streptococcus	1
Group B streptococcus	0
Haemophilus influenzae	0
Hepatitis A	0
Hepatitis B	2
Hepatitis C	0
Human Granulocytic Anaplasmosis	2
Influenza	59
Legionellosis	0
Listeriosis	1
Lyme Disease	30
Meningococcal Disease	0
Monkey Pox	0
Mumps	1
Novel Coronavirus (SARS, MERS, etc.)	420
Powassan Virus Infection	0
Refugee	2
Salmonellosis	4
Shiga toxin producing organism	1
Streptococcus pneumoniae	0
Tuberculosis	24
Varicella	1

In addition to the core public health nursing services provided, our PHN took on the additional responsibility of coordinating our mobile food pantry program. Started back in 2020, the mobile food pantry is a partnership between the Hudson Health Department, the Hudson Housing Authority (HHA) and Open Table Food Pantry. The program has continued to serve a growing number of residents, including ~40 HHA residents monthly and ~70 community members. To meet the high need, a second delivery was added each month for the community members who participate. Additionally, in 2023, we added the Peter's Grove housing development to the program where we provide food to more than 20 residents. We continue to rely on volunteers from the Hudson community to deliver the groceries to residents. We fully intend to continue the mobile food pantry here in Hudson, expanding as needed and where possible, in order to meet the growing food needs of our community while simultaneously working to increase food access in other ways.

Community Social Worker Services

In 2023, Alexandria (Alex) O'Hare continued in the ARPA-funded role of Community Social Worker, providing comprehensive professional social work services to Hudson residents with social, emotional, and economic needs, with specific attention to Hudson's most vulnerable populations. Our social worker provided many services in 2023, including, but not limited to:

- Conducted referrals to services related to: mental health, substance use, medical, parenting, housing, finances, basic needs, etc.
- Provided information on area resources and services for the elderly, individuals with disabilities, children and families, low-income individuals, and those with a variety of other specialized needs

- Connected residents with community supports to help complete applications for services such as: food stamps, social security disability, fuel assistance, DMH (Department of Mental Health), MassHealth, etc.
- Conducted crisis intervention and one-on-one consultation related to: wellness checks, collaboration with the Jail Diversion Clinician, and therapy sessions
- Provided community education
- Collaborated with community groups to address community needs and concerns, and to strengthen community connections

Mental health referrals provided by the social worker include an intake that identifies the best services for the individual based on their current needs. Mental illness/disorder is a term used to describe a large umbrella of conditions that may affect mood, thinking and behaviors. Common examples are depression, anxiety, schizophrenia, eating disorders, post-traumatic stress disorder, and addiction. Living with mental illness can make normal, everyday life hard in nearly every aspect of life. With mental disabilities having no bias, they are found in all ages, races, genders, regardless of income or socioeconomic status. Our social worker makes referrals to therapists, psychiatrists, Department of Mental Health, respite and/or hospital level of care. Until the individual is assigned to a mental health clinician, our social worker provides clinical consultation. Currently, the waitlists for services have improved but residents could still be waiting at least a month. The majority of the referrals made in 2023 by our community social worker have been made due to trauma and anxiety.

In Massachusetts, Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) are combined into one program called MassHealth. Hudson has a large low-income population that is eligible for MassHealth, but do not know where to start or how to apply. In fact, in 2018, Hudson experienced increased rates of those who are without health insurance at 4.1%, compared to the state (3.0%) and the MetroWest region (2.7%). Our community social worker was able to work with many individuals, families, and people with disabilities in 2023 one-on-one to identify eligibility and receive the appropriate documentation to qualify for MassHealth benefits. If an individual/family was not eligible for MassHealth, our social worker identified other affordable health insurance options.

In 2021, the Hudson Health Department became a referring agency for the Fresh Start Furniture Bank located here in Hudson. The social worker continued to make referrals in 2023 for individuals in need of items from furniture and linens to kitchenware and lighting items. This program has largely been utilized by residents under 55 years old. Other assistance that the social worker has been able to provide is housing application support, food services, and financial assistance. This includes assistance with South Middlesex Opportunity Council (SMOC), affordable housing, Section-8 housing, fuel assistance and food assistance, among others. Food assistance can consist of referrals to the Hudson Mobile Food Pantry, the Hudson Food Pantry and other area resources.

In collaboration with the Hudson Senior Center, our social worker has set up therapeutic groups. The current groups are: Caregivers' Support Group and Bereavement Support Group. These groups happen twice a month at the Hudson Senior Center. Thanks to grant funding, we have been able to offer an Uber Health program that provides free Uber rides to and from medical and mental health appointments for Hudson residents. This initiative is meant to compliment the Senior Center Bus and the MWRTA, which are not always accessible for some members of the community. This program has been a great success and we hope to be able to continue it using grant funding.

Additional Community Health Programs

In 2023, the Health Department, alongside the Conservation Agent and the Assabet Valley Chamber of Commerce, managed the Hudson Farmers Market. The market is held in front of Town Hall in downtown Hudson from June to September with some additional shoulder markets in the winter. The market has continued to have great success and offers a variety of products from vendors, including but not limited to: fresh fruits and vegetables, honey, meat, poultry, fish, bread and baked goods. We are grateful to the Assabet Valley Chamber of Commerce for partnering with us on this important initiative and working so hard to make it such a success for our community.

In 2023, the Hudson Board of Health continued to participate in the MetroWest Tobacco Control District (MWTCD). Funded by the Massachusetts Tobacco Cessation and Prevention Program (MTCP), and comprised of several municipalities in the MetroWest area, the program provides tobacco control services to Boards of Health including retail education and compliance checks. The Regional Tobacco Program Manager works out of the Framingham Health Department and is appointed by the Hudson Board of Health to complete the necessary

inspections in town. The Hudson Board of Health permits 21 retail tobacco establishments, which is our maximum capacity. All of these retailers were inspected for compliance with State and local tobacco regulations. All retailers were also subject to compliance checks, including structured and supervised inspections where a youth under the age of 21 attempts to purchase a tobacco product. We are pleased that we had generally strong compliance from tobacco retailers in 2023.

Emergency Preparedness Planning and Response

We continue to spend many hours working with other town departments, surrounding communities, and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) to prepare and update our Public Health Emergency Plan. Hudson is part of the MDPH Emergency Preparedness Planning Region 4AB, which was formed to facilitate sharing of resources and development of local and regional plans for public health emergency response.

Our department participated, along with other town departments, in the Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) spearheaded by the Hudson Fire Department. The LEPC was formed to develop an emergency response plan, conduct annual reviews of the plan, and provide information of hazardous material usage in the community to the residents of Hudson.

The state's Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) is active and recently underwent a reorganization resulting in us being a member of a now smaller, MetroWest unit. The MRC is made up of volunteers who assist in preparing for and responding to public health emergencies, they help run vaccine clinics and more. In addition to the MRC, since 2009, Hudson has Mutual Aid Agreements with Stow, Maynard, Northborough and Southborough to share resources in the event of public health emergencies.

We want to take this opportunity to thank other town boards and staff that have continued to aid us in the implementation of our responsibilities.

Board of Health meetings are typically held on a monthly basis and dates, times and locations are posted on the Town Website. As always, public participation in these meetings is welcome.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Delfino, *Chair*
Cassia Monteiro, *Vice Chair*
Allyson O'Malley, *Clerk*
Health Department Team

Lake Boon Commission Annual Report

Approved February 21, 2024

Statement of Purpose:

Formed under Chapter 712 of the Acts of 1941 by the Massachusetts legislature, the LBC embodies an enduring commitment to the preservation and sustainable management of Lake Boon. With a rich history rooted in stewardship, the commission remains steadfast in its mission to uphold the ecological integrity and safety of Lake Boon, while also promoting community engagement and environmental stewardship. Under its purview the commission can create and enforce regulations governing activities on and around the lake. These regulations, enacted as by-laws, may cover aspects such as boating, fishing, water quality, on ice activities, shoreline development, and environmental protection. In

This annual report reflects the principal programs and initiatives in advancing the purpose and mission of the LBC during the year 2023.

Composition and Engagement:

Comprising three unpaid members—two appointed by the Stow Select Board and one by the Hudson Select Board—the LBC operates with transparency and inclusivity at its core. Holding publicly posted meetings approximately eight times per year, the commission encourages community participation and insight into its activities and initiatives.

Despite the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic in 2023, the LBC remained dedicated to facilitating public engagement by transitioning meetings to a virtual format via Zoom, prioritizing both safety and accessibility. In 2023, the LBC was comprised of: Conray Wharff (Commissioner/Chairperson, Hudson), Dan Barstow (Commissioner/Clerk, Stow) and Dan Tereau (Commissioner, Stow).

Year End Report:

The Lake Boon Commission plays a crucial role in protecting the ecological health, recreational opportunities, and overall well-being of the Lake Boon community. Established to oversee activities in and around the lake, the Commission ensures sustainable resource use, water quality protection, and habitat preservation. Through regulation enforcement, maintenance coordination, and community involvement, the commission promotes collaborative lake stewardship, fostering harmony among residents, visitors, and the environment. Its presence highlights the importance of proactive governance in sustaining Lake Boon's integrity and vitality, benefiting present and future generations. This annual report reflects on the commission's dedication to safety, enjoyment, and cooperation in safeguarding Lake Boon and its community.

Winter Rules Implementation:

Recognizing the unique challenges posed by winter activities on Lake Boon, and in response to considerable feedback from lake residents regarding safety on the lake, the LBC undertook the initiative to establish Winter Rules. These rules, based principally upon Massachusetts laws related to the use of Off-Highway Vehicles (OHV's), unanimously passed after a thorough review process and public hearing, supplement existing regulations to address safety concerns during colder months. By extending safety measures to cover activities such as OHV, nighttime activities, snowmobiling, skating, etc., the Winter Rules demonstrate the LBC's collaborative and community focused approach to safeguarding the well-being of residents and visitors alike.

Healthy Lake Boon Initiative (HLBI):

Despite the conclusion of the HLBI grant in 2022, the Lake Boon Commission remained steadfast in its commitment to monitoring the health of the lake. Through the involvement of residents as "Citizen Scientists" and the establishment of a Scientific Advisory Board, the project continued to collect valuable data on water quality, nutrient levels, and emerging environmental threats. This collaborative effort reinforces the commission's dedication to preserving the ecological balance of Lake Boon for generations to come.

Weed Treatment and Drawdown:

Addressing the persistent challenge of invasive weeds, the LBC continued its comprehensive lake management program in 2023. By implementing measures to reduce nutrient loading and conducting licensed herbicide applications in accordance with state permits and local regulations, the commission actively mitigated the spread of non-native vegetation. The ongoing focus on education, invasive weed treatment, and lake drawdown, supported by data collected through the HLBI, underscores the commission's commitment to preserving the ecological integrity of Lake Boon.

Exceptional Service Recognition:

The Lake Boon Commission (LBC) extends heartfelt appreciation for the outstanding dedication and selfless service rendered by David Gray of Stow in overseeing various essential tasks concerning drawdown operations and fostering community engagement through effective communications. Additionally, our profound gratitude goes to Red Aylward, also from Stow, for meticulously coordinating the vital weed treatment efforts, ensuring the preservation of the lake's ecosystem and recreational amenities. Their tireless commitment and unwavering support play a pivotal role in the conservation and enhancement of our cherished lake environment, embodying the spirit of volunteerism and stewardship. We are deeply grateful for their invaluable contributions, which significantly enrich the well-being of our community and the sustainability of our natural resources.

In addition to Mr.'s Gray and Aylward, we would like to additionally recognize the town boards of Stow and Hudson as well as the local law enforcement community in their collective efforts to maintain and protect the safety and enjoyment brought to users of the lake.

Respectfully submitted,

Conray Wharff, Commissioner/Chairperson, Hudson

Dan Barstow, Commissioner/Clerk, Stow

Dan Tereau Commissioner, Stow

Fort Meadow Commission 2023 Annual Update

General:

The Fort Meadow Reservoir public ramp opened to the Early Fisherman Club and lake residents in late April to launch their boats, then opened to all Hudson/Marlborough residents on Memorial Day. Again, as in 2023, the early warm weather brought large and unsupervised crowds to Memorial Beach causing challenges to both the Fort Meadow Commission, but also local EMS as they were called on several occasions to address issues with swimmers beyond approved areas, safety and noise issues. Planning and discussions with the Marlborough Recreation Department have outlined a plan to lock just the beach starting May 1st and reopening when it will be fully staffed with lifeguards and attendants mid-June.

The Marlborough and Hudson Conservation Commissions, approved the dropping of the lake 4ft in late October 2023 to help control the invasive weeds and clams. This low lake height also provides an opportunity for lake residents to do any approved rock wall or shoreline repairs. Filling of the lake this year was delayed until mid-March due to DPW culvert work on Cullinane Drive. Fortunately, the very wet spring filled the lake in just 3 weeks.

As in past years, the Commission has noted a substantial increase in boating traffic as interest in watersports continues to rise. This has also brought a set of challenges with inexperienced drivers and general awareness to lake rules and regulations. It is surprising to the Commission that Massachusetts doesn't not require a boating license or boater safety course.

At the first Fort Meadow Commission meeting in May, the slalom course in the middle of the large basin was approved for another year. The slalom course continued to receive positive interest and almost daily use with little to no boater inconvenience.

The Commission in conjunction with the Marlborough DPW continued to maintain and make improvements to the Gene Hixon Public Boat Launch and provide additional safety buoys where needed to mark underwater hazards and provide important buffers to private property in the congested areas. The yearly spring installation and fall removal of the 14+ buoys on the lake is a major undertaking and marks the beginning and end to the boating season. The commission continues to make investments in safety gear for the lake and purchased several additional buoys in 2023 to replace older and failing buoys. Plans are in place for additional procurements in 2024.

In addition to the buoy replacements, Ft Meadow Commission funding was used for patrolling the Lake, weed treatment and operation of the Gene Hixon Boat Launch and public dock.

Safety:

Safety remains the number one priority for the Fort Meadow Lake Commission.

As in the past few years, 2023 was a very good year for the Fort Meadow boating community – thankfully, no major issues or accidents were encountered or reported.

As mentioned in prior annual reports and Commission Meetings, there is a true safety concern resulting from the added boating traffic, along with no formal Massachusetts boater training or licensing requirements. To accommodate, the Fort Meadow Commission in conjunction with the Environmental Police, have stepped up patrols during busy periods, but inexperienced boaters and jet ski operators remain a challenge to the overall safety of the lake.

Lake Health:

The contractor hired to monitor and address lake health performed a survey in early June. The report indicated that there was continued active and substantial growth of 2 invasive weeds (fanwort and milfoil).

A treatment recommendation was provided and applied in late June which necessitated closing the beaches and limiting boat traffic for the day. Unfortunately, the weed treatment funds available in Hudson and Marlborough budgets continue to be limited and only allow for spot treatments. A plan was drawn up based on the available funding that would address the greatest concentration of invasive weeds. An increase to the Hudson Fort Meadow Weed Control budget was requested and funded in 2023 and the plan is to fully address the weed issues in 2024.

Summary:

A schedule of the 2023 FMC meetings and agendas will be available at Hudson Town Hall and on the Hudson & Marlborough Town websites.

The Commission would like to thank the Fort Meadow residents and boaters for all of their suggestions, hard work and commitment to assuring that we had an enjoyable and safe 2024 season.

If you would like further information, you may contact the Fort Meadow Commission through Hudson Town Hall, Marlborough City Hall or you can email me at the address below.

Gary.R.Pelletier@rtx.com

Best Regards,
Gary Pelletier
Hudson Fort Meadow Lake Commissioner

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Hudson Fort Meadow Lake Agent