



Town Manager's Report

July 7, 2025



**Emergency
Management
Meeting**



**Lithium Battery
Disposal Law
Change**



**New Resident
Resource
Guide**

Learn more at www.salemnh.gov

To: Salem Town Council
From: Joseph Devine, Town Manager *[Signature]*
Date: July 7, 2025
Re: Town Manager's Report

MEMORANDUM



News and Noteworthy:

Emergency Management & Public Safety Coordination

We recently convened our quarterly Emergency Management Team meeting to continue advancing coordination across departments and external partners. Key topics included:

- *Emergency Management Webpage* – Staff are in the process of developing a dedicated webpage to serve as the public hub for emergency preparedness information, alerts, and training opportunities.
- *Upcoming Training*: Site Protection Through Observational Techniques – In collaboration with the Town of Salem, we are coordinating participation in a specialized training focused on situational awareness and facility protection. Invitations have been extended to major area employers including The Mall at Rockingham Park, Canobie Lake Park, and Tuscan Village, fostering broader regional preparedness.
- *School Coordination* – We initiated discussions with the school district on improving real-time communication and response protocols, with follow-up planning underway.
- *Town Hall Safety Communication Tool* – Staff are exploring potential mobile applications that would allow for internal alerts and updates specific to Town Hall in the event of a critical incident.
- *Public Road Closure Map* – We are preparing to launch a new interactive, public-facing road closure map. This tool will allow residents to view active and planned closures, both for emergencies and for scheduled construction and utility work, enhancing transparency and trip planning.

Veterans Tax Credit Legislative Update

The State Legislature recently enacted House Bill 99, which amends RSA 72:35 and changes how municipalities administer property tax credits for totally and permanently disabled veterans.

Key Impact:

- Under current law, eligible veterans receive both the \$2,000 Disabled Veterans Tax Credit and the \$750 Optional Veterans Tax Credit. HB 99 eliminates this “stacking” effective Tax Year 2025, requiring recipients to choose one credit or the other.
- Beginning next year, Assessing will be required to notify affected veterans of this legislative change and inform them that they may only receive one of the two credits moving forward.

Local Impact:

- 65 veterans currently receive both credits and will lose the \$750 optional credit, resulting in a collective loss of \$48,750 in tax relief.
- 1 veteran who owns only 50% of a qualifying parcel will lose \$375.
- 5 additional veterans currently receive only the \$2,000 credit and are unaffected by this change.

Policy Options:

If the Town wishes to mitigate the financial impact on disabled veterans, we may consider placing a warrant article on the 2026 ballot to increase the Disabled Veterans Credit from \$2,000 to \$2,750, effectively preserving the total benefit. This would require voter approval next March and would take effect in Tax Year 2026.

Battery Disposal Law Change & Public Education

Effective July 1, 2025, a new New Hampshire state law will prohibit the disposal of rechargeable lithium-ion batteries in landfills and incinerators. This ban applies statewide to both residents and businesses and aims to reduce the fire risk and environmental hazards posed by improperly discarded batteries.

Batteries Affected:

Lithium-ion batteries are commonly found in:

- Electric vehicles, bikes, and scooters
- Lawncare equipment
- Portable electronics (phones, laptops, tablets, cameras, etc.)
- Wireless accessories (headphones, speakers, toothbrushes)
- Cordless power tools and rechargeable toys

Disposal Guidelines:

- Rechargeable batteries must be recycled and may not go in the trash beginning July 1, 2025.
- Drop-off options:
 - Staples and Lowes stores offer free battery recycling. Single-use batteries must be taped at both ends or bagged individually.
 - Our Salem Transfer Station accepts both rechargeable and single-use batteries. Single-use batteries may be disposed of in household trash only if ends are taped or individually bagged.

New Resident Resource Launch

The Communications Committee recently launched Salem's new Resident's Guide, now available at salemnh.gov/newresidentguide and prominently linked on the Town's homepage.

This user-friendly digital resource is designed to help new residents quickly orient themselves with essential services and community offerings. The guide includes information on:

- Town government buildings and department contacts
- Utility services and transfer station access
- DMV services and dog licensing
- Voter registration and polling locations
- Public schools and educational resources
- Community spaces, parks, and recreational opportunities
- Official Town news sources and media channels

We encourage staff and community partners to refer new residents to this tool as part of their welcome outreach. The guide reflects a continued effort to improve transparency, civic onboarding, and community connection.

Deputy Town Clerk Appointment and Residency Requirement

As I get ready to post the Deputy Town Clerk position, I am reviewing the appointment process and legal requirements related to the Deputy Town Clerk position. Under RSA 41:18, I have the authority as Town Manager to hire a Deputy Town Clerk. However, for the appointment to be official and for the deputy to carry out the statutory responsibilities of the office, the Town Council must formally appoint the individual to the role.

An issue that requires clarification and possible Council direction involves the residency requirement for this position. While the statute does not state explicitly and uniformly across all references that the Deputy Town Clerk must be a resident, several statutes taken together indicate that residency is the expected standard.

RSA 41:18 states that the deputy must be “qualified in the same manner as the town clerk.” Since the Town Clerk is an elected position requiring domicile in the town, this language strongly suggests that the Deputy Town Clerk should also be a town resident.

Further, RSA 669:65, which governs vacancies in elected offices, reinforces this idea. It specifies that in the event of a vacancy in the Town Clerk position, the deputy shall serve in that role “unless the deputy does not have his or her domicile in the town,” in which case the vacancy is filled by the governing body. This clause assumes residency is standard and necessary for seamless succession.

This language does create some statutory contradiction. On one hand, the Town Manager may appoint the deputy, potentially from outside the community. On the other, the law restricts a non-resident deputy from stepping into the full role of Town Clerk if needed. This limitation reduces our operational flexibility in the event of an unexpected vacancy and may lead to delays in critical functions such as elections, vital records, and licensing.

From a management and continuity standpoint, there are clear benefits to maintaining a residency requirement.

At this time, I am requesting guidance from the Council on whether it wishes to maintain the existing residency expectation for this position or consider more flexibility for future appointments. Any direction provided will help ensure compliance with statutory obligations while balancing the Town’s personnel needs.

FY26 Budget Calendar & Joint Session Update

As discussed previously with the Council, we are moving forward with a revised budget review format that includes a single joint session between the Town Council and Budget Committee for departmental budget presentations. This approach was positively received by both the Council and the Budget Committee Chair and is intended to streamline the process and improve alignment early in the budget cycle.

We are currently finalizing the FY26 Budget Calendar and would like to run the following proposed dates by the Council:

- Saturday, October 4 – Joint Budget Session: All departments will present their proposed FY26 budgets in a single, coordinated session with both the Town Council and Budget Committee present.
- Monday, October 6 – Regularly scheduled Town Council meeting.

- Wednesday, October 8 – Council Budget Review and Q&A: Opportunity for Town Council to ask follow-up questions of departments and deliberate.
- Wednesday, October 15 – Council Budget Vote, with a backup option to vote on Monday, October 20, during the regular Council meeting if additional time or clarification is needed.

Budget Committee Sessions will follow:

- Tuesday, November 5 – Preliminary discussion and questions
- Tuesday, November 12 – Public Hearing and vote

We will publish a finalized calendar once dates are confirmed and will begin coordinating logistics with departments and committee liaisons to ensure a smooth and efficient review process.

Items Signed on Behalf of the Town Council Since Last Update:

- Payment Check Register (6-17-25) - \$2,873.000.60
- Payment Check Register (VOID) (6-17-25) - \$1,898,514.36
- Payroll Register No. 25 (6-17-25) - \$364,037.68
- Payroll Register No. 26 (6-23-25) - \$582,392.33
- Payment Check Register (6-24-25) - \$5,776,731.50
- Payment Check Register (VOID) (6-24-25) - \$100.00
- Payment Register (06-30-25) - \$8,235,366.99
- Payroll Register No. 27 (06-30-25) - \$362,031.23
- Payment Register (07-01-25) - \$4,551,730.74